2.25 Literature: The War of the Worlds (H.G. Wells): Test Pack

Total Marks

AQA / EDEXCEL / EDUQAS GCSE Literature 19th-century novel · about 25 minutes

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Each description below refers to one character or figure from The War of the Worlds. Name the character or figure being described in each case. Use each name once only.

(a) The first person to examine the cylinder closely after it lands on Horsell Common, and one of the earliest people killed by the Martians. **(1)**

(b) The narrator's travelling companion for part of the novel, a nervous clergyman whose behaviour becomes increasingly unstable and dangerous as the invasion continues. **(1)**

(c) A soldier the narrator meets on two separate occasions, who develops an elaborate plan for humanity's survival underground but does little practical work towards it. **(1)**

(d) The narrator's relative, who gives a separate first-hand account of the chaotic flight from London and the sea escape near the Essex coast. **(1)**

(e) The person the narrator takes to safety in Leatherhead near the start of the novel, before travelling on alone. **(1)**

(f) The species that arrives from another planet inside cylinders and quickly establishes technological control over southern England. **(1)**

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

2 State four separate details Wells establishes about the Martians' physical appearance or capabilities in the early chapters of the novel, before the narrator has seen them fight.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

---

3 Explain how Wells uses The War of the Worlds to explore ideas about imperialism and human insignificance.

(Total for Question 3 is 8 marks)

---

4 Explain how Wells presents the breakdown of ordinary social order and civilised behaviour as the invasion spreads.

(Total for Question 4 is 8 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 2.25 Literature: The War of the Worlds (H.G. Wells): Test Pack

Question 1

(a) Accept Ogilvy (the astronomer) **B1**

(a) Answer: Ogilvy

(b) Accept the curate **B1**

(b) Answer: The curate

(c) Accept the artilleryman **B1**

(c) Answer: The artilleryman

(d) Accept the narrator's brother **B1**

(d) Answer: The narrator's brother

(e) Accept the narrator's wife **B1**

(e) Answer: The narrator's wife

(f) Accept the Martians **B1**

(f) Answer: The Martians

Question 2

their bodies are large, greyish and rounded, with a cluster of long tentacles rather than limbs (oe) **B1**

they have enormous, prominent eyes and no obvious nose, giving them a strange, unfamiliar anatomy (oe) **B1**

they are physically weak and clumsy in Earth's gravity when out of their machines, moving with visible difficulty (oe) **B1**

any other valid detail, e.g. they arrive inside metal cylinders fired from Mars which unscrew to release them, or they turn a heat-ray on the human deputation that approaches the pit (oe) **B1**

Answer: Any four of: large, greyish, rounded bodies with tentacles instead of limbs; enormous eyes and no visible nose; physical weakness and clumsiness in Earth's gravity; arrival inside unscrewing metal cylinders; a heat-ray turned on the human deputation approaching the pit.

Question 3

Level 4 Clear, well-supported explanation: analyses more than one way imperialism and human insignificance are explored, with well-chosen reference to the text and clear understanding of context. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear explanation: explains at least one clear way this theme is presented, with relevant reference to the text and some understanding of context. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies a relevant point about the theme with some reference to the text. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple or general comment on the theme with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the novel opens by inviting readers to compare the Martians' treatment of humans with the way humans have historically treated other species and other peoples, unsettling any assumption of human importance
- humanity's advanced weapons and organisation prove almost useless against a technologically superior invader, deliberately reversing the position Britain usually occupied as a colonial power
- the narrator reflects on Earth's history of one group of people conquering and displacing another with little pity, inviting readers to see the Martian invasion as an extension of human history rather than an exception to it
- by placing British readers in the position of a colonised, powerless population, Wells challenges the assumed superiority underlying contemporary imperial attitudes
- humanity's eventual survival is due to chance biological circumstance rather than to any human action or virtue, reinforcing how little control or importance humanity actually had
- context: Wells wrote at the height of British imperial power in the late Victorian period and had earlier interests in the fate of colonised and vanished peoples, so contemporary readers would have recognised the deliberate discomfort of the comparison

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Question 4

Level 4 Clear, well-supported explanation: analyses more than one way the breakdown of social order is presented, with well-chosen reference to the text. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear explanation: explains at least one clear way this breakdown is shown, with relevant reference to the text. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies a relevant point with some reference to the text. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple or general comment with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the mass exodus from London is presented as chaotic and overwhelming, with ordinary politeness and consideration for others quickly abandoned under pressure
- specific incidents of people fighting over transport, food or space reveal how quickly self-interest can override community feeling when survival is threatened
- the class distinctions that structure ordinary life are shown to mean little once everyone faces the same danger, though Wells also shows some characters clinging to old habits and assumptions even as society collapses around them
- scenes of abandoned property and unclaimed goods show how quickly the structures of ownership and law lose their meaning once no one is left to enforce them
- the narrator's own moments of violence and self-preservation, particularly with the curate, show that he too is not immune to this collapse, despite his more reflective nature
- Wells's inclusion of the brother's account of the flight from London widens this exploration beyond a single character's experience to a picture of society as a whole under strain

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk